

Remarks by Amb. Ralph L. Boyce
U.S. Embassy Services Workshop in Chiang Mai
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D2 Hotel

Today's workshop is a collaboration among partners, including the Federation of Thai Industries, the Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and the Chiang Mai Consulate. I would like to recognize Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce President Mr. Narong Tananuwat and Vice President Ms. Udomrat Akkarachinores for their valuable support. From the Federation of Thai Industries, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Nipawadee Niratisayawanit, Manager and Ms. Orathai Chaikhunpol, Secretary. We appreciate your support for this event and look forward to partnering with you again in the future. You have provided us with an opportunity to reach your membership with this important information we will be presenting today.

As I travel throughout Thailand, I am constantly reminded of the longstanding relationship that the U.S. government and the American people have with Thailand. The economic cornerstone of this relationship dates back to 1833 with the Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations.

Thailand is the U.S.'s 15th largest trading partner. U.S. investment in Thailand is over 20 billion dollars and U.S. companies employ 250,000 Thais. On the other hand, Thailand's most important export market is the U.S. You can see we have a shared interest in each other's markets and therefore must continue dialogue to improve and enhance this relationship. The U.S. continues to see Thailand as a good place to do business.

But in today's global economy, companies around the world have an ever-increasing number of choices as to where to place their know-how, technology and capital. Thailand needs to remain competitive by constantly enhancing their attractiveness in human resource development, investor friendly government policies, improvement in logistics management and infrastructure and protection of intellectual property. Enhancing the global competitiveness will make Thailand a more attractive place to do business. And the Thai consumer, of course, stands to benefit as well from increased competition, lower prices and greater product choice.

Today I have already visited a local supermarket, Rimping, featuring U.S. wines and fruits, which I highly recommend and I will leave from here to visit the PepsiCo plant. These are all signs of U.S. interest in the north. I hope in future visits, we will see new U.S. businesses choosing the Chiang Mai area for investment.

I would now like to formally begin the program – Services of the US Embassy for Businesses that will feature speakers from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and the Chiang Mai Consulate to show you what we have to offer to help your business do business with the U.S. We have presentations from the Commercial Section to identify contacts with possible U.S. partners, the Agricultural Section to help understand the U.S. regulations for doing business with the U.S., Public Diplomacy to discuss education resources and the information center and last but not least visas. After the presentations you will have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with our representatives. Thank you for joining us and I hope this program provides you with some information to help do business with the U.S.